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THESSA'S BABE,

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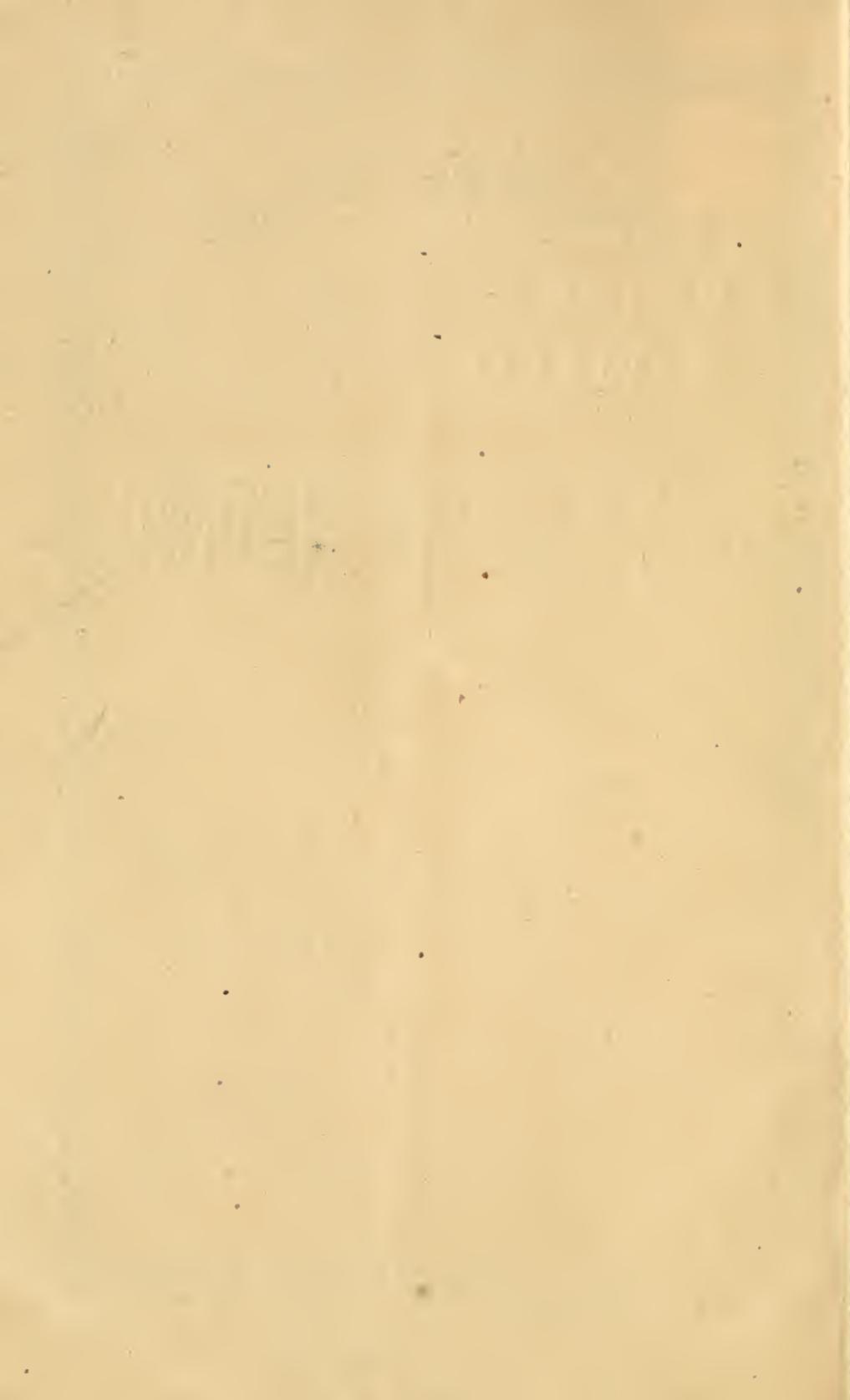
RETRIBUTION!

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS.

BY ADELLA R. WORDEN.

YPSILANTI, MICH.

1879.



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# THESBA'S BABE, or RETRIBUTION.

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ:

HERMETUS, Cambist of Rome.	CAPO, a Clown.
TERMENES, Citizen of Venice.	NORVO, son to Nan.
MAZZO, Artist.	TONI, { Minstrels.
FELDAMOR, Bandit Chief.	VILLETTE, {
GIANINA, daughter to Termenes.	GETA, { servants to Termenes
GOLINE, daughter to Hermetus.	JOSEF, {
CLAUDIA, mother to Goline.	JULIA, maid to Claudia.
NAN, Egyptian Sorceress.	JOHN BROWNELL, a traveler.
Doctor, Priest, Monk, First and Second Voices, Page.	

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## ACT I.

### SCENE I. *Rome. A street.*

*Enter FELDAMOR, l., and CAPO, r.*

FEL. Capo, salute ! How smile the fates since you were capering at the carnival? You have a greenish cast, a dogged unsettled look, as one in love.

CAPO. In love? Aye, that's well said, but deucedly irrelevant!—I'm out of luck, and lien, and luggage—therefore out of love. You know me, then?

FEL. Since when I hailed within these seven hills, I've heard your blabbering on every turnstile. I like you for your clownishness, and would engage your service—a princely stipend, if you play me well.

CAPO. In faith, good sire, I know you not.

FEL. Your silence on me or your life! My name is—Feldamor!

CAPO. (*aside*) The gods protect me, the wild brigand! Hold, sire, my service is bespoke. (*aside*) I am no doughhead for the target of banditti.

FEL. Spewling! Spit no more of this. I ask no service other than your own. Be what you are, I but engage you for your tricks. Join you the minstrels in my gang—go you ahead—attract the citizens, and then give way to their amusements.

CAPO. Well, I'll engage, with twenty sequins down.

FEL. So be it; though 'twere labor poorly made when once the price is paid. Shack, zany! Thou shalt truckle to my statute, the veriest vassal to rapacious greed. Ere long I come disguised. When you shall shall see this signal, follow me (*signals*). [Exit.

CAPO. Gold ! Gold ! The devil's rancorous fire !  
Which burns of hell in every mad desire !

Ha, ha ! rogue, you have caught a rogue. He likes me for my tricks.—  
Ay, tricks shall trick him. What comes ? A pilgrim by his looks. I  
would not wash his feet for all his luggage (*retires*).

*Enter BROWNELL with traveling bag.*

BRO. (*looking around*) And this is Rome ! Great city of the dead !  
How swells my soul in contemplation ! Here rests the king, the plebian  
and the slave, one in the dust ! What then is greatness, what is fame,  
that man should go in search of it ? An *ignis fatuus*—a hocus po-  
cus—rotten punk ! Yonder behold the dome of great St. Peter's Church  
—an humble fisherman to get so great a name ! Who would not lie un-  
to a damsel for a monument like that !

CAPO. (*aside*) It was a d——d sell, sure.

BRO. Little did Peter think, when flapped that cock to crow,  
That generations yet unborn should bow to kiss his toe—

I pant for glory more than natural drink ! The spiritual I needs must  
take for this my stomach's sake— Oh ! for a name ? To stand in some  
great vestibule of art, cut out in living stone—envied of men ! To have  
my picture on the drop of some great theater, for maidens to throw kiss-  
es at between the acts, while he, the proud adorer, faint with love, goes  
out to stimulate with cloves ! Oh ! for a name ! a name ! There runs  
the stream so famed in poetry and song— (*sings*) Rome, capitol of Italy,  
upon the Tiber river.

CAPO. (*coming up*) Well sung, good pilgrim.

BRO. (*confused*) What, sir— What, sir— What say— I am a trav-  
eler doing Rome.

CAPO. Methought the song from thine uplifted eyes  
Must be to laughing Venus as she flies.

BRO. Thou talk'st in rhyme, my fellow ; thou art a poet.

CAPO. Name me not thus ; it were no test of art  
To judge the whole by an unfinished part.

BRO. Thou art an improvisitor ! (*coming up*) We must be friends.  
Histrionic genius and poetic art walk ever hand in hand. I do congratu-  
late myself I met you. My heart bursts—

CAPO. (*aside*) Burst not on me.

BRO. —with the rapture of a new found love—ahem ! This is the  
clime whose balmy breath, kissing the petals of unfolding thought,  
flushes with roseate hue the bursting—ahem—substance of the brain—  
ahem—till, like some fair exotic, fraught with dreamy sense, it bursts—  
bursts—ahem—bursts— Hold to my hand ! I mount ! I fly ! 'Twere  
as some spirit did indite the words—ahem ! Sweet land of sunsets and  
of gush—ahem—gush—

CAPO. Good friend, thou hast an overmuckness of this "gush." Let  
up, else I do swear thou art a lunatic.

BRO. Blest with a nature susceptible and soft—

CAPO. Soft by —

BRO. I cannot feast with corpulency that I do not swell with fatness,  
with lean men but I, too, get lean. In company with crappies, I do halt  
and limp till that my joints do twist out and crack with sympathetic pain.  
Surrounded by the fairer sex, I grow a paragon of perfect loveliness.

So when I do assimilate with angels—I mean with poets—that is—when I assimilate, I soar—assimilate, I soar—ahem—I soar—soar—

CAPO. Chameleon, speak thy name. Come down from thy celestial heights, ere I do plait thee up a laurel wreath, and christen thee Apollo.

BRO. Know'st thou not whom thou hast the honor to address?

CAPO. I know thou art no commoner.

BRO. John Brownell, sir; John Brownell, the great historian!—Heard'st thou not of the day when I set sail for this, thy boot-shaped country, scarcely a month ago? Nor have I stopped to parley on the way, coming direct upon my field of thought, here to take notes. Yes, I shall write a history of Rome, that any child can read. It shall be found in each department of our public schools—none of these Pompus Pilius words for juveniles—the Anglo-Saxon plain. Each school-child in the land shall have one—an enormous sum past computation! A thousand presses going night and day scarce can supply demand—papers throughout the world will give it locals, and all— I beg your pardon, friend, my business presses me. You seem in haste to go. I would inquire, friend, where shall I find a scholar to conduct me—my time is limited to thirty days.

CAPO. (*aside*) Thirty days to do Rome! You mean a guide?

BRO. The same.

CAPO. Accept my service and my time is yours.

BRO. I could embrace you! (*aside*) propitious fate! Demand your price, it shall be doubly paid. (*weeps*) Kind friend, it overcomes me in a land of strangers thus to meet congenial ones.

CAPO. I blush at mention of a price. The merest trifle to assure the bond.

BRO. Here; take this gold. It is a farthing to my gratitude.

*Enter FELDAMOR disguised as a Prince.*

CAPO. Good cheer, your highness; I would detain you. This is my classic friend Brownell, the great historian. Brownell, this is Prince Philegas.

BRO. Your royal highness, I appreciate the condescension. Long may you live to reign triumphant.

FEL. The same to you in scholarly attainments. (*signals*) [Exit

CAPO. Good friend, I follow to the palace of the Prince. I'll meet you at St. Peter's early mass. (*goes*)

BRO. Hold you! I would your title.

CAPO. Well said. My name is Signor Capo. [Exit

BRO. Aye, Mr. Signor Capo; most distinguished name and more distinguished personage. His mind a store-house; his language poetry; his company sought for by nobility; a very jewel of a guide. "St. Peter's early mass." I'm lost to situation—I should have asked description. I'll go aside and hire me a second guide to show me my first guide—ha, ha!

*Noise of Trumpets in the distance. Enter minstrels NORVO, TONI, VILLETTA and GIANINA, singing.*

We stand upon the king's highway,  
While dancing nymphs sport on the green,

We fling, we fling our wreaths away.  
To crown, to crown this festive scene.

*Chorus of minstrels.*

Bring offerings great, bring offerings small,  
We take them all, we take them all;  
And while we wend our onward way,  
We beg, we beg to come another day.

*GIANINA with harp sings.*

There lay beside the waters wide  
A woman, fair and azure-eyed,  
Watching her child at play;  
Each pebble seemed a painted toy,  
Each plashing wave a fairy joy,  
As sped the hours away:  
When to the steep, with sudden leap,  
An elf sprang from the liquid deep,  
And bore the child away.

*Chorus of minstrels,*

Bring offerings great, etc.

*Enter MAZZO.*

MAZ. (to GIA. throwing coin into her lap) Hail, pretty maid! I like your singing well, but more I like your attitude in repose. I would that I might sketch that hand, that lays so light upon the harp; its grace would well accord with my Madonna. (touches hand)

GIA. Desist from contact with my flesh. I am a strolling singer, it is true—

MAZ. Disarm your fears, fair maid. I gaze upon you as sculptor might a sylph in marble, but to transfer its fair proportions.

VIL. Good sire, if I might do as well, a little sum would tempt me.

MAZ. I am not rich, and furthermore blind to your charms. (to GIA.) Your hand, sweet, is so fair— [NORVO and VILLETTÉ converse apart

TONI. Hold, hold! No love-sick twaddle there, you rake! Out with your gold! Enough, she is your model. (to GIA.) Stand up, you sulk-ing calliope!

MAZ. I pray you, strike her not. I would not copy an unwilling maid; but what I have, that would I give (to GIA.) for thy consent. Grant me an hour's sitting, and if abashed, a veil shall screen you from my gaze.

GIA. Nay; 'tis enough, skulking like any dog about your streets, a thing of scorn, to ask me greater degradation. Aye, force me if you will; my fair proportions shall distorted be, and this same hand a claw become, to filch your greedy eyes—

TONI. We are no foxes caught with putrid scent. Show up the money; she shall go your way.

MAZ. Not so; I wait the pleasure of the maid. (to GIA.) A little time may change that frown to blushes on thy cheek.

TONI. Grin there, you wench, or by the fates your soul shall broil in Tantalus.

MAZ. Here, in great mercy take her hire. Get you on hence, nor let me think on this! My brain is maddened by the sight! (throws coin.)

[Exit, throwing kiss at GIA.

*All scramble for coin.*

TONI. The dastard! Blow away, thistle-down; puff! puff!

NOR. Here, give it up.

TONI. A pretty softy; this would twice have paid her hire.

NOR. He was more kind than any christian.

VIL. Methought he had no eye for charms, to take yon ragged serf.

TONI. He has no eye for tinsel, minx. No dress at all were beauty best arrayed, thinks he, and so think I.

VIL. What looks a butterfly with wings, without is but a grub.

TONI. Some fishes bite for grubs that will not dangle on a painted hook.

NOR. Come, we'll along; Gianina is in tears.

*Enter FELDAMOR and CAPO.*

FEL. What's all this hubbub on the public stile? Hie to your roosts, the sun is set. (To GIA.) Hush up your blubber! What the devil's up?

VIL. She's got above herself, she has.

FEL. (to VIL.) Push out, you slabber-sided sow! (to GIA.) Get on, you slut!

CAPO. (going) He likes me for my tricks, ha, ha!

[Exit

Exit

*Enter MAZZO.*

MAZ. Darkness already steals upon the air; the street is silent, senseless as this breast. 'Tis done! The shaft within my heart no more may be withdrawn than the shot lightning can recall its spent velocity. Ne'er saw I such divinity in flesh! Her liquid eyes o'er-leapt their flood-gates when they fell on me, cleansing my soul of ev'ry fancied love, till all my being, like a spotless page, stands written in her image. Aye; when the demon clutched her, and her loose bodice parted in the tray, nor Raphael's Venus could o'er-match her breast of faultless contour! Never such charms were bred in the foul lcons of that dread monster, he who for self swaddles her beauty in decaying rags, and holds her as a model to the trade—and I, forsooth, did barter at her shrine in holiest bargaining. Her frown dismissed me, nor for a world would I displace myself in her good grace—but other daubs will drag her to their stand, and what my brush would deify, will grow an amorous queen, glaring in hideous paint!

*Enter Page, hands note and retires.*

MAZ. (reads) Goline! The gods protect me, pity more than blame, I did forget my bonds! Contracts are cob-webs, which do break when love pursues! Goline, thy claims are sacredly premised, and must be met.

[Exeunt

SCENE II. *Home of HERMETUS.* *An apartment.* CLAUDIA walking up and down, GOLINE reclining on sofa, HERMETUS in easy chair.

CLAU. I am so worked about this dalliance, my nerves are jerking like a whip-cord. Goline, how can you lie upon that settle when I'm in such a fever? It should be you, not me, to bear this racket. This suit has cost me many sleepless nights, while you, I trow, scarce trouble in your waking hours.

GOL. Hush you, good mother; Mazzo will not be long, and oh! this charming scene, where Julia meets her love!

CLAU. Have you no thought of him whom you must meet!

GOL. Scarcely, I own, since I have known of this dear Count. List, till I read you how, with bounding heart, she springs to his embrace!

HER. (*throws down paper*) Claudia! Claudia! Be calm yourself. I wot not you are more in love with this d——d artist than the maid herself. Bother the drat! I'd better pleased he never come—kept me from loans which would have filled my coffers over full. He comes before the clock goes round, or he goes suing other money bags!

CLAU. Goline, heard you your sire's words? Goline!

GOL. Good mother, did you speak?

HER. I said, and I repeat, that he who so aspires to your hand must come within the hour, or, by the furies, he'll unbitch with me, and pay his toll from other sacks than mine!

GOL. Is it so late? Oh, my most worthy sire, I pray you be not hard; Mazzo has many calls, and he, as I, may not be mindful of the hour.

CLAU. (*aside to Gol.*) Did you dispatch the page?

GOL. In truth I did.

HER. Women are bats, that flop and flounder in their blindness! Hear me in this! Ambition in his soul takes precedence of love. He crossed the sea, traversed the burning sand, to hunt an Ethiope to squat upon his canvas. You set a time in which to name your nuptials, he forgets the hour, or not forgetting, keeps you in suspense, with no regrets. Out on the contract with such lethargic—

CLAU. Nay, my lord; it is his heart that doth his brain inspire. He gets not any title but Goline must know to share it with him. Mark you the day he gained the medal at the gallery, when the enamored crowd closed in upon him, and with honied words sung to his praise; he fl'd their honors, and to Goline like as a schoolboy hurried, and from her shining hair twisted a cord of gold and hung it to her neck, saying the while, "So all my triumphs but as jewels hang for thine adornment."

HER. A softly thing! A very gosling habited as man! Better he meet appointments at their due. Such watery condiment for love! Love is a fire within, whose flame sleeps in sulphuric gases; give it escape, it bursts a lapping fiend, wreathing its victim in devouring heat, till heart, life and eternity crumble to ashes in his track!

GOL. So bursts Vesuvius, my sire; but note how soon the lava cools. Mazzo and I have been betrothed since childhood. The wildest beast grows tame when handled as a cub; so with our love. 'T has grown like as my arm, which while I have it gives me no concern, sever the mem-

ber, every nerve within me writhes, and the heart's blood leaps out to stay the fleeing pulse.

*Enter MAZZO.*

GOL. Mazzo, my love, the hour is late, but come—

HER. (*bowing stiffly*) Good day, if 'tis not yet to-morrow.

MAZ. Your pardon, sire, and madam, and Goline; my studies did absorb my mind, nor thought I 'twas the hour till that your page did bring me word. I trust I have not lost in your good grace?

CLAU. (*affectionately*) We should forget ourselves to think an ill of thee, (*to HER.*) and since the hour is late, my lord, we best defer our counsels till the morn.

HER. And tote me to the tune of handy, aye!

GOL. Good mother, you are pale!

CLAU. I'm really very ill! Hermetus, support me to my couch. (*to MAZ.*) You will allow us, I am very ill.

GOL. Shall I—

CLAU. (*aside to GOL.*) He's in a passion—we must get him out! Hermetus, will you come? I have a faint! Assist me if you will!

HER. Goline, loose up her apron strings, and call the servants to her aid. I'll have this business ended, if the devil has a fit—ended to-night!

[*Exit CLAU and GOL.*

*Enter JULIA.*

JUL. Master, who's down?

HER. Go to the madame's chamber for her orders. [*Exit JULIA.*

MAZ. And is your lady subject to these turns?

HER. They subject her convenience. But you—What calls you to my domicile, that I needs tarry from my trade and work myself into a lobster at your pleasure?

MAZ. Good sire, you do mistake my purpose, if you count my pleasure in your discontent. You are no stranger to the contract which has bound your daughter and myself these many years. Go cool yourself, and if you like me not, be bold to own it—I would not pilfer in your fruit though it were watering in its ripeness!

*Enter JULIA.*

JUL. Master Hermetus, the lady, sire, is very, very ill.

HER. Go to the d—l with your women's fidgets! (*Exit JULIA.*) They tack to larboard when the wind is foul and belies not to their caprice. What bring you in exchange for this endowment of my loins? What surety for her maintenance!

MAZ. I have my love, my prospects, my am—

HER. Hold there, you sapling! You are glutted full, stuffed to the gills, with prospects in my money bags! Go, thou blood sucker of perdition! Vampire of gluttony!

MAZ. (*aside*) Only that I had that passion into paint!

HER. Go to — thou parasite of hell!

*Enter CLAUDIA and JULIA.*

CLAT. (screaming) Oh, oh ! Hermetus, I am dying—dying—and you will not come ! (falls on sofa, hands MAZ. note unobserved)

HER. Oh, Claudia ! Speak to me ! Am I too late ? Most wretched sin ! Claudia ! She cannot speak to me ! Heaven forgive—Claudia ! Claudia, speak to Hermetus—tell him he is forgiven—speak ! Go for the doctor !

MAZ. (puts note in pocket) I will attend— (goes)  
JUL. Two messengers have gone already. Here comes the pill-man now.

*Enter Doctor.*

HER. Save her, oh ; doctor ! save her, or I die !

DOC. Be silenced, man. (stirs by, feels pulse) It is a clear affection of the heart ; such paroxysms often end in death.

HER. Most dread malady, most dire complaint ! Affection of the heart ! Doctor, is there a likelihood that I be now exposed to this disease ?

DOC. Trouble you not, it seldom ravages the male persuasion—I might say never. Remove your lady to her couch at once ; let no one enter but the servants of the house, not e'en her daughter.

HER. Doctor is she so bad, so dying low ?

DOC. And you must hold her hand an hour by the clock, giving these soothing drops betimes, 'till from a hundred beats the pulse is seventy.

HER. Oh, never fear ; I will not leave her form for my provender ! Most lovely Claudia ! She called to me, I would not come. Oh, saintly Claudia ! [Exeunt all carrying CLAUDIA on sofa

*Enter MAZZO.*

MAZ. She has played well, and won on him at last—disgraceful pantomime—a loathsome portion for a nuptial banquet ! A beastly sire—intriguing dame and most unloving paramour ! The mask is off, the face is bold and black, and must I wed it ? Saintly mother, bend'st thou there, or dost thy spirit linger with the soul that erst has rooted in the gypsy's breast ? Shackels oft bind unwilling hands, but where is the padlock for unwilling hearts ?

*Enter GOLINE.*

GOL. Mazzo, you seem disturbed. I trust this little scene has not unsettled you with me. You know my sire is boistrous and obtuse, and speaks more rash if may be to his wedded spouse, whom now he watches with unwinking eyes.

MAZ. Nothing disturbs me other than a brain grown sick with its imaginings. I should have sought my pillow but for you, my love. I came to bear the appointment for our marriage day.

GOL. Right glad I am 'twere not to-night, for since a pillow would have ta'en the place of me, 'twere better tired brain should wed it.

MAZ. Goline, I'm in no mood for jokes—the outburst I have witnessed has unnerved me. If 'tis Hermetus' will to cheek me out, and

yours to parley with me, let on ; I will accept my sentence at your hands.

GOL. Mazzo, my sire dotes on you—but smallest specks grow mountains in his eyes when they inflame with ire. He was o'er-vexed at your delay, and the few coin he got not by these means danced in his sight like devils in the drink, till all your visage shone with hungry eyes, set to devour on his shining gold. Mazzo, we have been happy as we are—the marriage bed perplexes me to fill. Let us go on as yet.

MAZ. A dozen years, and still you say go on ! Pray name a day, your pleasures' distance.

GOL. Were I to name the day as now I feel, 'twould be as far ahead as are the stars, fleeing as we pursue.

MAZ. Goline, prepare me kindly if you will, but scruple not to tell me of this change.

GOL. I am not changed a whit since I was born. 'Tis this that chafes me. I would unloose these bonds—go out into the world—know if this heart so surfeited with love can hunger in its absence—(*going to him*) I have been reading such a sweet romance—and oh ! the heroine, she loved in such a way that all her being thrilled at the approach of her adorer ! and when he touched her hand, the blood leapt to her cheek—her eyes grew lustrous, and her heart beat on so fast, an hour's time was reckoned but a minute ! Not thus am I forewarned of your approach. I have a project. You have heard of Nan, the sorceress ? She that can read the planets as a page, and note their concourse with our destiny ?

MAZ. Let then the fates decide us ; when it shall be your pleasure I attend.

GOL To-morrow's night is Holly Eve—at sunset are the fates propitious. 'Tis far across the hills, an hour's canter will scarce bring us there.

MAZ. Our coursers matched in speed shall then unmatch us at your will. Goline, the hour is late—I shall not fail to meet appointment. So love, adieu, adieu. (*goes.*)

GOL. You are not going till you kiss me ?

MAZ. Kisses from me but curdle in your veins.

GOL. You make me most unhappy saying that !

MAZ. The heart that signals no, at my approach may thrill at my departure. Good night ! (*kisses hand*) [Exit

GOL. How cold he seems to nights ! I have offended him, mayhap : he's grown o'er-sensitive of late. Why, I have talked like this a hundred times, and he has grown the fonder. Good heavens ! if he should cease to love me ! I never thought he could—I must not let him go like this—I will o'ertake him in the garden. [Exit.

## ACT II.

### SCENE I. *Gypsy's Camp. NAN's Cottage.*

CAP. (*with puppets.*) Put her down there, duffee, put her down. Ha, ha, ha ! a clever set and suited well to gobble in the coppers on the street. Aye, kings, 'tis said, who shoot their eyeballs from the common herd, oft bend their bellies to the puppet's dance. I am in double harness in my trade : Yoked with an ass and with a beast than which the

black hyena is more tame and true. He that has taken me for guide is an ass indeed, for while I have an hundred names of heroes in my skull, I know not where they hinge to, more than that red doll! I talk in rhymes! Ha, ha! That would go miles with John Brownell—ha, ha! Oh, I shall pass with him—but Gods defend “the history of Rome! But of the beast! He likes me for my tricks, aye! he shall rue the day he hired me for tricks! Blacker than the devil is this Feldamor; he goes skulking in the dark, his eyes like fire, and his grinning jaws oozing of ulcerous poison, fed from the carrion of his red hot breath! Oh, snake; thou art a dove in fairness to this laughing beast!

*Enter GIANINA.*

GIA Oh Capo; I'm gone wild with fright.

CAPO What should affright you, pretty one?

GIA I sat me in the shadow of yon rock, musing within myself, when all a sudden something from behind did spring upon me, and with iron grip did hold me fast. I screamed, but ere the sound broke on the air, a hand clutched at my throat, and like a dog did thrust his face in mine—then knew I it was Feldamor! I sprang and left my tunic in his hands—look at my flesh, it is all black and poisoned with his touch!

CAPO Has this black sneakling any right to you?

GIA I do belong to Nan. Oh, Capo! care for me—I am most wretched, born into a life I loathe—despise—

CAPO My pretty maid, come wed me; we will fly and be no more obeisant to the fiend!

GIA Hush, hush! Be never jumping till you know the leap. I want your eyes for lanterns in my dark; wilt lend them, Capo?

CAPO My eyes for lanterns? aye, my sweet; so they do light the pathway for thy feet.

GIA Capo, I want a friend—if thou'l be such, call me not but Gianina, nor ever prattle in a way that makes me hate you.

CAPO Gianina, trust me; I am eyes, and ears, and hands, and feet, to see, to hear, to beckon and to run, in your sweet—

GIA Hush!

CAPO In your (*smacks lips*) service.

*Enter VILLETTÉ.*

VIL Old Nan is searching far an near; you best go on.

GIA True, I am over long. I go.

CAPO. (*singing*) Oh, stay not, love, away; come soon, come soon

VIL You sing not thus for me.

CAPO. So, so—You never leave me that I may. When I do go why sing you not to me?

VIL I would much sooner sing to have you stay. Capo, you're more in love with that black Gyp—, than me!

CAPO. Why think you so, Villette?

VIL I heard you smack her that I did.

CAPO. I smacked her so, (*smacks lips*) but I will smack you so (*kisses VIL*).

VIL. You big philander, you ; just give me back that kiss—you stole—  
you stole, you thief !

CAPO. Well, here it is. (*kisses*)

VIL. Oh, that aint half so big—not half so big !

CAPO. Villette, I am busy with the dolls—

VIL. Busy ! Always busy, when I want to play—you've been a half  
an hour with the Gyp.

CAPO. Villette, don't call that pretty creature Gyp.

VIL. Don't call her Gyp ? Then angel if you like.

CAPO. So, Villie, that is well ; she is as far above us, as the angels  
are.

VIL. (*spitting*) I could slap her face ! She haint no prettier than  
me, and can't dance half so well.

CAPO. (*taking hold*) Give us a trip then. (*dances and sings*) Vil-  
lie, if you love me, Villie, if you do—

*Enter MAZZO and GOLINE.*

MAZ. Let us not interrupt the dance.

CAPO. Good Signor, it is well ; what is your lordship's and the lady's  
will ?

MAZ. Is yonder hut where lives the sorceress ? The lady would con-  
sult the fates.

VIL. It is. I will attend the lady if she please.

GOL. Wilt thou, dear Mazzo, that she let me in ! (*aside*) I would  
not have him hear it, for the world, and all—

MAZ. It may be better. I will wait outside.

VIL. and GOL. *go to the hut*, VIL. *rappling*, window opens above.

NAN. Faugh ; faugh ; go 'way ! I want no visitor to night.

GOL. I wanted to consult the fates.

VIL. She is a rich one, Nan.

NAN. I have no mood for divination ; go to, go to.

GOL. (*holding up coin*) Here, I shall pay you for your service.

NAN. Small coin brings unpropitious fate on Hoily Eve.

MAZ. (*coming up*) Here is a lump of gold.

NAN. Ha, ha, good sire ! Thy bride shall wear a diamond crown !  
(*opens door*) Come here, come here.

*Exeunt GOL. and VILLETTÉ. Enter NORVO with Flute unseen.*

MAZ. Whence came the moppet you were tripping with ? I well re-  
member to have seen her face.

CAPO. This is the Gypsy's camp ; that was Villette, a minstrel in the  
gang.

MAZ. The same I saw in Rome ?

CAPO. Belike, they stroll for miles around.—

MAZ. Tell me, my fellow, where is she that plays upon the harp. Go  
bring her here and I will double this. (*gives coin*)

CAPO. She lives along of Nan ; I'll fetch her if I can. [Exit CAPO

MAZ. Good Heavens ! That I should light upon the spot where  
comes the fawn to sleep. I should not see this vision of the sky, so

shall I be dissolved in her bright-ray, as melts the snow in pathway of the sun.

*Enter CAPO.*

CAPO. The fair one will not come; her garments scarcely hold her for their rents.

MAZ. (*taking off mantle*) Here take my mantle—let it wrap her round, I will detain her but a trice. [*Exit CAPO*

Divinest form! Would I could wrap it in a satin robe, lined all with down, and whose soft folds would press her not more tenderly than I.

*Enter GIA. face turned away.*

GIA. Good Signor, with my humblest thanks I bless you for this loan. He that hath rule of me, would thrust me in your sight—nude as a slave upon the block.

MAZ. Turn here your face, that I may read your gratitude in smiles.

GIA. The tears in pity quence my burning cheeks—so shall they wash away my shame; bid me not look till every trace is out. What want you, sire?

MAZ. I know not what till I have seen your face.

GIA. (*turning*) It is the painter! He that for gold would bargain in my shape!

MAZ. No, no! I would not buy the, bird, nor touch thine hand—though I would eat it for its sweetness. Hide not thyself, but understand me—it were love alone.

GIA. (*putting off the words*) When high-born gentry talk to Gypsy maid of love, then were that passion infamous and bad. Here, take thy cloak, I will not make a debt, the which if paid e'en in the smallest part, would squander all my wealth. You smile at this. Do rags make poverty? Nay! I have that which many an high-born lady hath not, nor yet can buy, with her possessions; it is a jewel like the diamond, which when 'tis chipped or hath a blemish e'en so slight, is never reckoned pure.

MAZ. How shall I woo the, that thou wilt believe? I would befriend thee, if thou needst a friend, nor more, if more offend.

GIA. Gianina weeps! Stranger, thou hast touched a spot so tender in my breast, that I would die, could I believe thee true! Were I a lady born, had I position, had I wealth—then would your wooing savor of delight; but me, a hireling of meanest type—serf to a fiend—bandaged in tatters! (*shrinks away*).

MAZ. Here, take the mantle. Have I been unkind that thou distrusts the spirit of the loan? Take it, I pray, if I have yet one merit in thine eyes.

GIA. Oh, gentleman, you have been kind—more kind than all the world.

MAZ. (*putting mantle on*) As folds this mantle 'round thy perfect self, so binds my heart the idol of its love! [*Exit GIANINA*

*Enter GOLINE and NAN.*

GOL. Mazzo, I have tarried long; your pardon, love.

MAZ. Has it been long? I thought you over quick.

NAN. (*to Gol.*) Good lady, you go hear the music play, (*points to NORVO*) whilst I undo the fate of this fair gent. (*to MAZ*) You got some gold—you no much rich—you wed with raven hair and blue black eyes—

MAZ. (*aside*) That is my sweet !

NAN. She get rich—your bride will wear a diamond crown !

MAZ. “A diamond crown !” Nay, that’s not likely, save her tresses be the crown and her two eyes the diamonds which lie shadowed in the thicket of her fringed lids.

NAN. Not thus ; (*going*) thy bride shall wear a diamond crown !

[*Exit NAN*

GOL. *coming up*

GOL. I have been so absorbed in yon sweet youth, I did not hear thy fate ; pray tell it me.

MAZ. “Fair woman does not love me.”

GOL. Aye ; and “the white browed artist loves me not.”

MAZ. That were a fair exchange ; but come, we must be away. It will be midnight ere we cross the hills.

GOLINE throws kiss at NORVO, *he the same*, *Exit NORVO*

GOL. (*going*) You shall know all when we are on the way.

*Enter FELDAMOR.*

FEL. Hold there, you spooney ! You get off too quick with trifling on the gyps ! Pull out your ducats !

MAZ. But I did pay the Magi over well.

FEL. Your money or your blood !

GOL. Oh spare us—but we paid—

FEL. Shut up, you gobster !

MAZ. Here, take the purse ; 'twere cheap at that to rid us of your slang. (*goes*)

FEL. Halt, noddy ! I want that gew-gaw on your front—pull out !

MAZ. My watch ?

FEL. The same.

GOL. That was a gift of his dead sire.

FEL. Shut off, you strumpet ; unhitch your trinkets for your insolence !

MAZ. I see no help. We are the victims of the bandit Feldamor ! (*hands watch*)

FEL. (*striking at MAZ*) Go to the devil and be d—d ! You heat me, and, by Jupiter, I'll wash the sin out in your reeking blood !

GOL. Here, take my jewels ; they are costly gems, but by the laws of Rome you shall be made to suffer for the crime.

FEL. Ha, ha ! and thou go witness on the bandit ! So shall thy flesh make carrion in my den !

MAZ. That is my cloak about your back—I lent it to the maid. Go, take it her to shut her from thy sight, and all this plunder shall be gladly let. (*goes*)

FEL. The Gyp. shall strut not in thy rakish garb ; thou didst inflame her with thy sugared spit—she lies with me ere yet the night goes out !

MAZ. May god in vengeance numb thee into death, and spare the maid he formed but for himself ! [*Exeunt MAZZO and GOLINE*

FEL. (*looking at watch and money*) After much dangling, I have hooked them in. This comes from hanging women on for bait when big fish bite, they must have tempting grub! It was a clever shift when I took in that hag—the boy is over slow—but crawling gatheres wind, and 'tis his stock in trade, since he must blow it out with pooping on the fife. The Gyp! Aye; she's the magic that shall turn my grotto to a golden cave! She shall be in my power ere long, but yet she seizes a chicken hovering by the hag. Hawks oft grow lean while yet their prey is fat'ning—so fats she for my cud'ling. She hates me me as gods do devils, but I love her as the devils do the gods, whom when they catch do uniform with heaven to officer their troops—thus with the countersign of right move train on train, nor priest nor prelate can divide the train. So shall her countenance be fair decoy into a hell pit of licentious flames, where princely patrons reveling in their lust, shall build a kingdom and a throne for me, over the ashes of her vanished life! Aye, aye! For me! I thirst with feverish impatience—My tongue is swelled—I taste of blood! The hag must die! The young'ling feed the trade, while now the festive season is at hand! But hold! I send her out to strut—she doth escape me! Doth escape me? I swear by Jupiter hell shall escape me sooner than this fair devil, plumed with the saints, shall sail through paradise on snowy wing! Aye; poised above the gulf with downward eyes on me a vanquished fiend—d—d by her gloating smile and doomed to bear it, yea, eternally, that angels may grow happy as they gaze! Hell and its imps lend hand whilst I do plan!

[Exit

SCENE II. *A Street.*

*Enter BROWNELL with bags.*

BRO. Well, I am vexed at this Mr. Signo Capo. He makes a fool of me, sends me to the Spanish places, says he will meet me there. I wait, and wait, 'till half the citizens have split their mouths at me, and just as I am off the handle with myself, he heaves in sight and bows and scrapes me into humor. I do forget how much great men endure in getting great. I want a pastime out of work—I will not get it—small things do vex me—I must rise above them—to write a history of Rome, is nothing small. Here are my bags stuffed full of notes—I cannot leave them at my inn, they would be pilfered in an hour's time—I needs must lug them every where I go. I scarce have written up the twins—a month is past! What is the prospect for my history? I dum; at this 'twould take a thousand years to write it, and a fleet of ships to carry all the manuscript. I am in trouble with my enterprise—my brain is all afire—I see of visions in the air—revolving wheels—electric sparks—leaflets like flying chaff! I am not mad! it is the fever of necessity! My skull is pregnant with a thought! 'Tis born! A new invention! I will not write a history of Rome bound in a volume like a grammer—no! I will have it printed in a primer form—and colored like a fashionplate—thus—History of Rome, by John Brownell, price thirty pence per month—a pence a day—Why, juveniles can save that in a candy stick! But the confectioner, he pays my revenue! Ha, ha! I might have gone into

the taffy trade—it would have footed up the same—pugh, pugh! Such sticky words do smear so chaste a mind! No, no! A name! A glorious name! I will proceed at once to close the contract with my publishers—I shall engage them for a hundred years—this makes a permanent transaction—so shall I stay in Rome to furnish notes, and when I die, my son John will furnish notes, and his son John, and his son John, and so the name of John Brownell shall ring through all eternity!

CAPO. Master historian, (*bowing low*) and have I been the cause of this disturbance in your mind!

BRO. Ah, Mr. Capo; better late than never, it is said, but I say better late than early.

CAPO. How so? What now?

BRO. By this, your dally, I have gained a fortune in a thought!

CAPO. A fortune, man? to say is to deceive;

Show me the checks, so seeing, I believe.

BRO. I am become a pensioner—richer than Croesus—which shall endow my children, and my children's children, and my children's children—

CAPO. Hold, in great mercy! Bite it off and ditto it.

BRO. We must away—take you this bag—I am to ship my manuscript at once—hail, history of Rome!

CAPO. Great man, thine attitude would strike a painter dumb! Go thou and get that classic face drawn out, 'twill make a stuning frontispiece, for this thy history.

BRO. Great thought! That were a fortune of itself! This humble face within so great a book—Glory enough for John Brownell! [Exit

CAPO. (*going*) I think the dolt is raving mad.

*Enter MAZZO.*

MAZ. 'Tis a most fatal dart, that thus hath pierced me! Slain are the aspirations of a life time—gone the ambition which as reigning deity hath governed me, 'till I, its worshiper, have burned the fagots of my own soul's light to throw a halo o'er its molten shrine! Gone everything that was—Oh, what an agony hath this poor clay encased, since when my heart went out, leaving an emptiness more vast than continent, nor which a heaven full of resurrected dead, trooping in single file could occupy! Naught but the Gypsy's love—so do I want it, were the world and paradise mine own, I would exchange them for her occupancy in this dead place. But comes the clown, and in his company the foreigner. I doubt not 'tis the traveler of whom he spake on yester' night.

*Enter CAPO and BRO. with empty bags.*

MAZ. Ho, Capo; well-a-day. What would you in this quarter?

CAPO. Seeking you out to serve my gifted friend. Brownell, this is the artist, Mazzo.

BRO. Good day, sire, Mr. Mazzo, I trust you never may grow sick.

MAZ. So this is the historian, the great historian Brownell.

BRO. Modestly the same.

MAZ. Thou would'st a portrait for a copy plate?

BRO. A copper plate? I thought to have it printed on a steel plate, they're landed up so high—take any kind of plate—pewter or 'arthen—

big or little,—only so I do have a classic face,—that was the term applied to this my blushing cheek—

BRO. Cheek by—

BRO. By you fair poet.

MAZ. What would you in design; a bust?

BRO. No, Mr. Painter, spare me that—paint me a sober man. Though I do take a tip up now and then, I do not pride myself upon it.

MAZ. I think I understand, you wish a striking attitude?

CAPO. Better he strike an attitude than me.

BRO. What? Put me up a pugilist? No, Mr. Painter! Anything but that. Why, some big Roman would write out a challenge on me right away! No, no! I'd run a mile—thrust this poor body through a hollow log—do anything rather than have it said a christian gentleman like me would lay a fist on any man.

CAPO. I go his oath on that.

MAZ. You do not comprehend the terms of the profession. You wish an animated face—not in repose?

BRO. Oh, no! I would not be asleep—no, bless you man, no, no; though I have heard my good old mother say when she has stood above my sweet repose, “oh, what a look of innocence he hath!”

MAZ. You do—

BRO. Hold you—it might suggest the hour of inspiration. I am inspired—no doubt of it. Ah, when I meditate on this my history—such streams of thought come pouring in my brain as cou'd not flow from any human source—they gush—gush—gush—

*Enter VILLETTÉ unobserved, beckons to CAPO.*

CAPO. Good friend, thou'st gushed till thou hast made me dry, turned this my puncheon to a desert in whose sands unnumbered tongues loll and cry out for drink—when I do tap the rock I'll bid you to the gushing—

[Exit.

BRO. (looking anxiously after) My poet guide is ale-ing, I suspect hath secret longings which a friend should share—my swelling bosom like an out blown sail carries this empty hulk, till like a homesick traveler it doth heave—in—port—a moment, and the traveler returns. [Exit

MAZ. An ignoramus of a man—a bundle of eccentric ignorance. But comes Hermetus rushing down the street—I doubt not he has spied a Gypsy in his camp.

*Enter HERMETUS.*

Thou'rt blowing like a whale, what's up the stream?

HER. I want to see you on important business and alone—come we to yonder inn.

MAZ. I have engagements here nor can I leave till that I am dismissed of that. Speak on, Hermetus—

HER. (whispering) Tell me in heaven's name who is this man Goline is running daft about?

MAZ. I think he is a son of Nan, the witch, by name Norvo.

HER. (louder) Norvo! Aye, that's the thing, that's him—she says it in her sleep! She's gone distracted after him—we have to lock her in

the gates ! Now what I want is you should marry her at once, and put a stop to all this cabala.

MAZ. I am a sapling, glutted full, stuffed to the gills with prospects in your money bags—so says Hermetus !

HER. I was bull mad to have asserted it. You are a gentleman, ~~but~~ so you take Goline, I'll strew your altar with a rain of gold.

MAZ. Not so ; we once were plighted, but ourselves had not a hand in it ; the bonds grew never stronger in our hearts, and when they broke 'twas but as breaks a chain that well has rusted through.

HER. Not if I offer you a palace and a princely revenue ?

MAZ. What were palace, if that its sovereign be duty bound ? No, save your gold, 'twill make a handsome present for your tawny son. Goline will have him, so she says, and if you'd save her an ungrateful leap, you best undo the bars and let her out.

HER. Best, did you say ? That you are conjurer in this trick, I do believe, my soul. Blast you or any other man that dares to set a foot within my halls ! I shall go home and set a guard about my premises !

*Enter PAGE.*

PAGE. Good master, Lady Goline has fled ! Here is a note. *[Exit*

HER. Go to — you lying scamp ! *(to MAZ)* Here read the scrap ; more likely the old woman in a fit—her riddles need some tact in guessing.

MAZ. *(reads)* When you shall read this note I shall be far away, enroute to my dear Norvo.

HERMETUS *rushes about, throws traveling bags.* *Enter BROWNELL.*

BRO. Here, Mr. Painter ! Mr. Painter ! He'll jam my carpet-sacks and break the ketch—

MAZ. Hermetus ; I pray you sire, consider where you are, for whilst you traveller is peaceable enough, he has big eyes upon his bags.

*Enter CAPO.*

CAPO. Good sire Hermetus ; your daughter, sire, has got the priest a job—

HER. What ! how, you fool ! Open you out another blast o' that, I'll strike you at my feet ! *(rushes around. BROWNELL hides bags.* CAPO *going*) Here, move a pace till you have let it out, I'll make a foot-ball of you, dog !

CAPO. *(aside)* Twould plague the gods to speak and speak not in the one breath. *(to HER.)* I want no game of foot-ball with that size of clubs.

Though I be mute, I'll roar with belching face,

Or shout and silent be, to gain Hermetus' grace.

HER. You madden me ! Tell me the whole on't in a word.

CAPO. *(rushing out)* Married ! Married ! Married !

HER. Monstrous assertion ! Goline gone into breeding Gypsy brats ? I'll split the tongue that blackens thus the scion of Hermetus ! *[Exit*

BRO. Mr. Painter, I must go after them. I fear me my dear friend may get the worst with that grey lunatic ! *[Exit BROWNELL.*

MAZ. So shifts the scene that brings me to myself. To-morrow's night the witch hath granted me an interview with she, 'my love—Oh, that a sleep like death would shut away the hours from now till then! A night racked with unsatisfying hopes, till its duration were an age—a day to run the gauntlet through extended line, host upon host, each countenance a sneer, each tongue a dart piercing me through and through, while from the multitude goes up the shouts, "She loves thee not! She loves thee not!" Gianina! 'Tis her name. I go to seek thee, press my anxious suit, and so thou lovest me, Heaven witness thou'lt be mine.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE III. NAN'S HUT.

NAN *reclining.* GIANINA *near.*

GIA. Nanna, you will not die. Oh, do not look so sick and perishing.

NAN. Child, no; Nan cannot die, else were her bones acrumpled. Death like a stork ne'er feeds on shrunken meat.

GIA. Nanna, why say you we shall part, if not you die?

NAN. The devil hath decreed it—I can read it in the planets as they turn—Darlin', put here your cheek, Nan wants to kiss it for the last, last time.

GIA. Oh Nanna! Kill me, but do not leave me when you go! What would become of me? Thou'rt made me like you better than myself.

NAN. Fie, thou shalt loathe me when I cast my hide; thou'rt bedded with a snake, played in its shining coils, and sucked the poison of its deadly tooth—so have I charmed thee into love. Go you unto the palace by the sea, which once I showed you; take you this locket, give it to the hands of one Termenes; talk not to him of Nan—say 'twas a gift from one now dead. Go not from him till he has seen the scar upon thy neck (it is a birth spot) he will know the mark. He hath for this same knowledge offered a diamond crown—it shall be thine!

GIA. Why talk on so of crowns, when thou dest know in that same hour thou leav'st, the bandit will o'erpower and seize me. If thou'rt a serpent, sting me, let me die! What, hast thou saved me in my innocence to thus condemn me in my riper years, and dost thou league with Feldamor.

MAN. Feldamor; the gods forbid! Take you this dirk; it hath a venomous point. Pierce thy sweet flesh and die in that same hour he doth o'erpower thee. It shall not be—thou hast a lover in whose keeping thou'l be safe—

GIA. A lover, Nan! Not e'en myself respects me, since thou hast cast me out. Who then can love?

NAN. Norvo is kin to thee, he is my son, more now I cannot tell. Since he is flown I needs must follow. He comes that loves thee; this is the hour. Put on yon scarlet rig, make yourself seemly in his presence. I will crawl out and watch the crafty bandit—he durst not turn the socket of my gaze—so eriuge the weaker devils in my sight! [Exit

GIA. Cursed is my fate, cursed beyond recall! Whom can it be that counsel'st with the witch in my behalf; so I do hate him! It is he that gives her leave to swap me off, making herself a snake, that I may eringe to follow in her path! She is not that she says, but what she is to me is dubious—What am I? Whence the issue that didst bind me

to a lineage so base, which a proud spirit hath not power to change? To meet a lover, did she say? So will I habit as the sorceress, and know his plan of getting on in love.

*Puts on rig. Rapping at door.*

GIA. Come in; Come in.

*Enter Mazzo.*

MAZ. Is this the cottage of the witch?

GIA. Who's this that, guilty, seeks the dark for divination?

MAZ. It is the artist, whom you bade to come, with promise that Gianina should be here.

GIA. Aye, aye; So, so. But dost thou love the maid with that pure kind that thou wouldst sink thyself to mate her?

MAZ. So do I hold her in my mind that I would yield my name, my love of art, society, aye, everything, to wander in the trackless forest at her side.

GIA. (*throws off mantle*) Oh, gentleman, it is myself.

MAZ. My bird, it needs not eyesight to detect thy song. Put herethy hand, feel how the thunder beats within my breast. So thy sweet voice doth echo in these hollow walls. Thou hast my heart, give thine to me; thus shall the tempest in the sunshine sleep.

GIA. Thou didst not always love me?

MAZ. I never loved till now.

GIA. So then the high born lady did not have thy heart?

MAZ. Nay, more then brother heart, this now she hath. Thou wouldst my past, she that is wizard may undo with thee; but now, sweet, let me be acquaint if this my wooing is averse to thee? Gianina, speak! Tell me if I have favor in thy grace—thou still art silent (*puts arm around*) let me unseal those lips, they burst with nectar, if I sip them not.

GIA. Nay! When I lend them to thy use, then shall I all be thine. Uncap the fountain and the hidden spring gushes to life, wasting itself in spray

MAZ. Still thou art doubtful or thou dost not love.

GIA. Dear gentleman, I know not what is love. Thou must have felt before thus to be conscious it were rightly named.

MAZ. When thou dost speak a thousand pulses wait upon thy words: when thou art done they leap about me in such rapidness, I live a lifetime in a single hour.

GIA. Not thus Gianina feels, then must it be she doth not love.

MAZ. Tell me, have I no hope that yet thou mayst be thrilled?

GIA. I feel not that I breathe at all when thou art nigh—my eyelids half are shut with sleepy drowsiness—I dream, the air is full of music, so subdued, so soft, it doth intoxicate my brain—I grow crazed—my senses plunge into delirium—so sweet—so holy—that I float on wings!

MAZ. (*aside*) Oh; it is love! What else could breathe such tenderness? (*to GIA.*) Sweet dreamer, make here a pillow while thou sleepst, so thou mayst never wake since that thine ecstacy be love—

GIA. Love! that was nurtured on the breast of hate; eradled in vice;

ted by the bread of plunder : This in exchange for thy pure heart ! oh, that I might have died ere I had met the torments of this hour—legions of spotless angels crowd thy way—their white robes trail not in the gypsy's path, go thou with them ; roses shall bloom to breathe their fragrance, as they kiss thy feet. Go, thou dear gentleman ere thou shalt look to hate—Go, while in blindness, thou dost think me fair. Oh, leave me—leave me—I beseech you—leave me ! Go, go : I will not—date not—cannot love—(*falls at his feet weeping.*)

MAZ. (*raising her.*) Sweet one, refrain from this, I cannot witness it—Gianina—darling—wert thou a Magdalene, with this same heart I could not love thee less ! Say thou art mine - say we may never part—speak, or in silence I shall read consent.

GIA. (*springing away.*) Oh, gentleman, thou'st folded rags against thy costly suit ; look, they have stained thee in their contact. Curse here the beggar that forgets her filth thus to contaminate her God :

MAZ. Child ! Love ! Gianina ! Come to me, let me enfold you ! I am but human, thou art all divine !

GIA. Not so ; my reason has come back.. Thine arms shall ne'er encompass me again till robes of purity shall cover me. Nanna did say I should be snowy robed, so shall it be when waves of death shall wash away my stains, and over there beyond the flood, kind one, Gianina, white and clean, shall dream again upon thy breast. (*Turns to go.*)

MAZ. Thou will not leave me ?

GIA. Go thou—in kindness go—else will I pierce me in thy sight.—

MAZ. Gianina, for the love I bear, I beg, beseech you, fly with me. Nan did agree to it ; why should you refuse ?

GIA. So doth she hate thee, else she would not thrust a bantling on thine hands. Nanna did say I was in wedlock bred, but much I fear me it were hard to prove. I know not what I was—but what I am debases me enough.

MAZ. Never such soul as thine begotten was in sin ; thou wast a primal issue from the womb of love. Such allegation doth its record bear, written by angels hands—legal accounting heaven copieth not.

GIA. Thou'dst fashion me a Peri, saintlier than a dove, but I am not, nor ever can be, what thou makest me.

MAZ. I would not have thee changed from thy sweet self. Wast is an idle word, art is a present peace, and will be, hath of joys immortal. Wilt be my joy ?

GIA. Here take my vow—I will be thine—in spirit evermore.

MAZ. Give me the casket where the jewel lies ; so may I never lose it.

GIA. Thou canst not have it, till 'tis silken lined. Rags were a libel on the jewel's worth. Go, lest the bandit track thee out and kill thee. Leave me while yet the beldame crouches in his path. Go, go. If thou dost love me, prove it in thy going.

MAZ. Wilt thou refuse to fly with me ?

GIA. Thou'l prove thy breeding if thou leavest me.

MAZ. Bird, thy conditions urge me—I will come again. Will thou I come ?

GIA. (*turning face, weeps,*) I know not, gentleman, if we shall meet again. Good night ; good night.

MAZ. May the good Angels, hovering o'er thy sleep,  
    Make thee to pillow on thy Mazzo's breast;  
The while thy spirit, in oblivious dream,

    Joys in consenting that he shares thy rest.

[Exit Mazzo]

GIA. I want to die—what else can make me white? All save my spirit is as black as sin; that must be pure, else would it mate with foulness and be hushed. As if to mock me string these lengths of hair, each one a viper that doth sting me. I thought not of it till I saw it matched against the fairness of my love. Nanna will leave me, so she says—aye in that hour—my sad soul shall be free (*looks at dirk.*) This senseless blade hath death upon its point; piercing my flesh, 'twill send my spirit to the Lethe wave, whereon the boatman waits. What of the tribute money for my passage o'er? I have nor gold, nor kinship with the dead. The Virgin Mary knows not me since that she wears no jewels from my hand—so shall I stay in purgatory till a thousand centuries go by. Oh, wretched poverty! that hath not toll wherewith to gain an entrance through the gate upon the “golden streets.” Doomed! doomed to endless torment with the d—d in Hell! What's this that hugs against my breast? The crucifix! the locket Nanna gave! (*opens it*) It is a face that smileth like a friend. Sweet locket, (*kisses*), thou art gold! I'll sell thee for my passport into Heaven! What's Heaven? A city on whose streets millions of angels crowd all strangers to me, speaking a language that I never knew. No one in waiting for the gypsy there; no friend in Heaven; alone in all that multitude of saints, skulking a frightened outcast from their questioning gaze; there is no place for me—no home—no happiness! What's happiness? 'Tis love. What's love? 'Tis God! Then did He meet me in my lover's heart, and 't was Heaven in his clasping arms! sweet Heaven, that bideth not save in the hearts' affections! To die is but to leave Heaven after me in that my love is here. So shall I live—live till he goes to wait me on the other side. The moon is falling from the sky, the hour is late; Nanna did never leave me thus. I feel afraid—I do not like to stay alone—Oh, Nanna! Nanna! Why do you make me cry? There moves a shadow o'er the floor—it is the beast! I saw his eyes glare on me in the dark, (*screams*) Nanna! Nanna!

*Door opens. Enter Capo.*

CAP. Be not afeared, 'tis I, Capo.

GIA. Capo, where is Nan? I am so deadly scart, I thought the bandit had me.

CAP. Hist! There is mischief brewing in the camp. Nan has been murdered or is thrust aside!

GIA. Nanna murdered! Oh, fateful bloodshed!

CAP. Capo is left, he will protect you though the chances are that Feldamor will get you in his clutches if he can.

GIA. Be sure he will. Capo is there no possible escape?

CAP. Be married mine, so we will fly to-night.

GIA. Fly; to be a scullion in the street? No, let him close upon his prey. See thou this knife?

CAP. The steel is but a needle in its strength, it would not serve you in an hour of need.

GIA. Aye, many a secret hides this slender blade; 'Twill mark his

destiny, or mine, ere that I fall degenerate to his greed! Nanna is dead, poor kind old Nan, but yet her spirit lives. That! that! will keep me from his hands—I will not die, though *I* do face the devil in his den! *I* am no longer child, since that *I* am beloved; a lion's courage runneth in my veins. Sweet love! Dear Nanna! *I* am over strong since thou art with me.

[*Exit CAPO*

*Enter FELDAMOR.*

GIA. How dur'st thou step across the sill?

FEL. Ho, thou art pert! Come now, my lass, you'll cuddle in the Buzzard's nest till morn!

GIA. Stand, Feldamor, *I* fear thee not! How art thou grown so bold?

FEL. The hag is dead, the painter, curse him, bleeds upon the sward, blubbering your name with his last breath. So you are mine, a bawdry for my use; nor death shall hocus me, since *I* will fit thee for my chum in hell!

GIA. Art thou the murderer of my love and Nan?

FEL. (*shows watch*) Dost see this trinket? it did loop his vest!

GAI. True; *I* did see it once upon his front. He wore not any such to-night. Feldamor, Nan is not killed! No, she is here; her spirit doth embolden me. Thou say'st my love is dead. His heart is in my breast—I felt not the twinge of pain. That thou art base enough to spill their blood I question not. Kill me if thou hast murdered them—prove here thy valor in the act. Thou durst not strike; so do I dare thee and defy thy threats!

FEL. Ha, ha! the cat has found her claws; so shall I pare them in my tutelage. Come to my lodge—so thou comest willingly, all's well; refuse me and by all the gods, thy blowsy flesh shall wizen in my den!

GIA. Hast thou an honor in thine oath? And is't for me to choose?

FEL. Thou croon'st like the hag; Thou'st part and lot with her! So doth my hate consume my beastial fire—but on its funeral pile canticorous vengeance burns! Thou impious toad! Thou blue aristocrat! By Hell and Jupiter, I'll starve that blood out of your purple veins or hell shall cauterize thy soul! Go to the charnel and be d—d! Consort with rotting corpses! Play tag with the ghosts! Blanch! Die! Ha, ha! Thou dost defy me! Hist on your carcass!

GIA. If thou didst hate me, thou would'st spurn to touch. Go, I will follow to the den.

[*Exeunt*

### ACT III.

SCENE I. *Apartment in HERMETUS' Palace.* *Enter CLAUDIA.*

CLAU. Oh, my! Oh, my! Oh, my! Goline is married to a gypsy—a regular black faced gypsy. Oh, I shall die, I know I shall! All his doin's—Hermetus doin's. I done my best to get him out; but no, he'd have his say that night, and now he gets his pay. I'm glad; just glad! But it will be my death! Ah, yes, my death! But who will care? Not he. If *I* was dying in my sins, he would not gt the priest

to save me ! Oh, oh ! I haven't shut my eyes a wink since she ran off  
—Hermetus doin's (*weeps.*)

*Enter HERMETUS unobserved.*

HER. (*walking up and down*) Go, blast the varmit ! And my old woman—sink her ! All her fault ! I've said them novels would be twaddle her ! All the old woman's fault ! Here I have spent another day—a likely cambist to neglect my loans—a very dog on track—(*runs into CLAUDIA.*)

CLAU. Oh, my head !

HER. Go soak your head ! You've got things in a pretty fuddle.

CLAU. You'd better talk of me ; just see the end of that romantic girl !

HER. Romantic fool ! I'll chain her up head down, get something in her brain to physic out this folderol.

CLAU. My dear Goline ! No one could know your sweet poetic tastes like me—

HER. Go sickly bovine, with your bossy calf ! Thou art not weaned from sucking her, I trow.

CLAU. Hermetus, I am getting in a faint ! My heart—oh, dear, my heart ! I feel so strange—one of my dreadful spells—

HER. Go on, you're doing well. Give us a fit ; but mind, some other dolt will hold your fist, while the young pert gads off to get her future in a gypsy camp—

CLAU. (*aside*) How could he know ? Hermetus, do you say I knew Goline was going to the camp ? I never knew it, there ; I never did. I that was sick to death, (*weeps*) the doctor said so. Oh, you cruel, cruel man !

*Enter JULIA.*

JUL. Mistress mine own, there is a woman wants to see you bad (*aside*) hem ! (*tries to attract CLAUDIA*)

CLAU. (*still weeping*) I cannot see her, bid her go on—

HER. Show me the trickster ; I do mind this hem, when it doth show a kink up in the eye—

*Exit HERMETUS*

JUL. Mistress, mine own ; it is Goline.

CLAU. (*rising*) Goline ? Where ? Where is Goline ? (*starts to go*)

JUL. Mistress, I pray you stay. She has the gypsy too—

CLAU. The Gypsy and his bride ! Oh, the disgrace !

JUL. And you did never see such pets of eyes. My, my ; but he's a sugar lump, a very sweetie of a woman's man ; the perfect essence of romancy. I'd rather have him than a king, I had !

CLAU. Hush you !—I fear Hermetus will do violence. Heard you that wail ?

JUL. No, mistress mine ; That is yon sycamore that creaks the live-long day. Stay you, it will be better if you stay.

CLAU. How looks Goline ? is her eyes swell'n with grief ?

JUL. Goline ! Her face is like a bed of pink ; I almost smelt 'em when I kissed her cheek.

CLAU. I must go down ; I cannot remain—

JUL. Mistress, mine own ; and you should mark his bashful lovin'

ways ; he looks down at her, as a school boy on his first new breeches, and gravy questions if 'tis him or no.

CLAU. I hear no words. Hermetus must have put them out.

JUL. There is a hoiden come to smooth the matter with Hermetus. Do nothing fear, the master is o'er fond of that white chick; nothing unlocks his money chests like her soft palaver.

CLAU. Julia, go to the door ; I do believe they're all a coming up.

JUL. Let us set by as though we never thought.

CLAU. Julia, my psalts ; the air oppresses me.

JUL. Now mistress, you do let the master speak.

*Enter HERMETUS, GOLINE, NORVO, and CAPO. GOLINE falls in CLAUDIA's arms weeping.*

CARO. Good Claudia, night and day thou hast in labor lain,  
But may so fine a son make thee forget thy pain.

HER. Good Claudia, save tears for funeral obsequies ; this is a day for joy and revelry. Give this our son a welcome, if you will, he's worth a dozen of your color daubs.

CLAU. (wiping eyes) We welcome you into our heart and home.

NOR. That's all right ; I'm suited in my bargain, glad you like it too. Goline's a pretty girl, a deuced pretty girl.

HER. Come now, ha, ha ! Wake up the premises, blow loud the horns—ha, ha ! We'll have a glad triumphal ! Gold, cake, and wine flow free for Roman citizens to-day ! Come Claudia to my arms—hug up—Come son and daughter, all, we'll to the garden for a romp.

[*Exeunt CLAUDIA, HERMETUS, GOLINE and NORVO.*

CAPO. So runs the world—the mouth goes up or down as pipes the tune of joy or woe. So the old bluster's going to have a feast ? Ha, ha ! The cord that ties the money bag runs from the heart ; loosen it there the knots will fall apart. It is the hour in which I am to meet the artist—my blood runs cold within me, for she, the saintliest angel of his love, dies every moment in that poisonous den. The hole is in the hills whose bowels are a honeycomb of tombs—there lives a hermit on the further side, a monk of wondrous age ; he hath accounting of each seam and fissure in the rock ; he did acquaint me that a dozen men could open up a passage to the den and free the maid—I must away ; an hour's delay might see the death watch on her brow.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The bandit's cave and exterior of den. Enter VILLETTÉ with food and flask; approaches den.*

VIL. This is the frightful den. I fear to open lest I fall as dead ! (unlocks and opens) Gianina, are you here ? All is as silent as a tomb—Gianina sleeps—it may be she is dead—I durst not move—this is a horrid place—an awful smell of deadness—Gianina, wake ! wake up, it is Villette, with food. (GIANINA, rises, strikes away, falls.)

VIL. I durst not stay—I shake in very fear ! Gianina ! Gianina !

GIA. What is't ? I felt its claws—I thought me Villie spake.

VIL. Gianina, 'tis Villette, come here to bring you food.

GIA. How durst thou venture in this place ? So shall thy bones keep company with mine !

VIL. The bandit dead is drunk ; snoring he lay within his lodge : I stole me to his side and from a leathern bag did filch these keys ; this one

unlocks the cave and this the den ; here is his flask—take it and get of spirit in thy veins.

GIA. The flask is Feldamor's—take it from hence. Though every Mood drop in me hath an open mouth, pursed out to suck the aroma of life, I bid the starvling feast upon my flesh, gnaw on the muscles in my wasted shape, drink of my breath, but taste not the nepenthe of satanic lust ! Villette, thou'rt over good, I thought me none did care or pity : Capo did come—days have gone by since then.

VIL. Capo has fled the camp ; he told me could he free you from the den then he would marry me.

GIA. Aye, then thou'l linger in virginity. Villette, give me the morsel in thy hand ; I'll try to live, that I may meet my love—so may'st thou meet with thine, (*at sight of food a half starved mongrel rises.*)

VIL. (*screaming*) The beast ! Look ! Holy Virgin save ! Gianina, see ; its eyes are on thy food ! See, it is moving—what is that ? Oh, this most horrid den—it comes—it falls—(*VILLETTE grasps GIANINA.*)

GIA. (*putting her away*) Villette, be calmed ; it cannot do thee harm. A mongrel thing—of dog—of woman—it doth never rise save when the bandit comes or scents it food—rises to fall a shapeless mass. It circles round ere it goes off to sleep and once springing its length of chain did claw me on the cheek. Nanna did tell me hell had firey fiends and flames that burned eternal ; that were a cleanly heritage to this foul den ; fire doth purify, consumes malaria, breathes life above contagion, makes earth akin to Heaven. This is my torment, he that put me here the devil grim, to be his consort were supremest agony. Go thou, Villette ; if thou stay'st longer, thou'l be d—d, as I. Fly from the bandit as thou hop'st for peace.

VIL. Gianina, as I live I'll seek thee here again. Take thou sweet courage ; we shall yet be free !

GIA. Go, Villie, I do tremble for thy life. Go.

VIL. Thou must get free, else I do lose my Capo's husbanding—he needs me not if thou diest here.

GIA. We'll die together is thou get'st not off.

VIL. So must I go. Hark, I do hear the bandit shuffling on the way. I fly ; I fly. [Exit VIL.

GIA. (*coming out of den*) Sweet air, how I do fill myself with thee ! Draught of infinitude ; power of Almightiness ! life ! What's life ? Each breath an hour is the more to suffer in its kiss seductive of enwombed pangs. I ask not now to live, nor yet to die, only to meet my love in purity, my love ! mine ! The words sound a monody above my corse, a trental for my soul passing the stygian tide. I, that did hold myself accursed, the object of a thought ! It seems a vagary conjured in brain oblivious of reason, to be embosomed in caressing arms, sheltered, protected, honored and beloved. Great God permit ! palsied the tongue that dar'st to mock at Deity—the sun ne'er rises west though half a world do obsecrate with heaven. Life's ocean hath no pilot for a craft like mine, sailing along at mercy of the element, ploughed in its furrows, on its breakers flung, saying to perish, yet with anxious gaze peering through all the dense fog of distrust to watch the incoming waves, crested with new born hopes. They pass me by—I see them dashed to fragments on the dark shores of despair ! Oh, death ! fling thy pale bunting o'er the dangerous rocks, for I am drifting, drifting to my doom. I hear

the croaking of the Vulturous fiend who, waiting, hungers for my soul, 'tis Feldamor, he comes ! I'm lost ! I'm lost ! [Exit GIA. in den.

*Enter FELDAMOR.*

FEL. The drunk has left me crusty as Pluto ; he was badly formed for wooing maidenheads, but when he won them not, he siezed a charmer in his charriot and bore her off ; so I, enraged at the reluctance of my goddess—ha, ha !—shall force her to my will ! Aye ! it was play when I did ape to hate so fair a Venus. She's grown o'erlean, so must I fatten her a while. I want no slimster in my bed o' nights. Puh, puh ! she were in better trim a moon ago. A man is less than devil when his grit run foremost of his groin, (*tries key*) what's this ? The den undone ? Did I go leave a loop hole for the brat ? (*kicks around*) Here hist you out ! (*the beast embraces him; throws off*) Go to, you raving slut head. (*looks around*) The Gyp. is gone ! Hell hold me, she is gone ! Pluto assist me, she is gone ! Jupiter be d—d ! (*Two men spring into den from back opening. FEL. rushes out.*)

FIRST VOICE. Here is the monster ; chain him ! (*clutches FEL.*)

SECOND VOICE. Drag to the stake—burn him !

FEL. (*tears away; draws dagger*) I'll gut thy souls ! Away !

*Enter CAPO.*

CAPO. Die, villian ! (*fires*) I'm thy trickster, (*fires*) die !

*Enter MONK. VILLETTÉ runs in, takes CAPO's hand. Enter TONI. Monk kneels above the corpse of FELDAMOR—Curtain.*

#### ACT IV.

SCENE I. VENICE. *Apartment in TERMENES' Palace.* TERMENES sitting.

TER. Life is of pungent duress when hope's stellar disk goes down leaving a vacuum of ghastly nothingness and tenebrous despair. Man's power creative is, but heaven intercepts when sin doth mark the issue. The dark Egyptian, she that won upon me with her philtered sorceries bore off a son, whom in disowning, justice will not duplicate. I led a Grecian to the alter, fairer than Helen, yet as Mary pure, 'but on the glove that nestled in my palm I saw the shadow of another hand. A twelvth month past, and on the fragrant breast of Thesba lay the sweetest babe a doting mother's mouth e'er kissed. Kind of her kind, and moulded of her shape, she marveled much a consort so devout should spurn the offspring of connubial joy; but ever as I bent to touch, a tawny face exultant peered between. The child was stolen, Thesba is in the tomb, all that a generous God bequeathed, crushed in the grasp of one scorned woman—of Nanopatra—

*Enter GETA.*

GETA. Good, my Lord : there waits a beggar, by her look. What is thy lordship's will with her ?

TER. Take her these driblets (*hands coin*) and an old man's blessing.

GETA. Here face is oh ! so pinched and pitiful, no common racea I do see so much. She begs not money, but moments with your lordship.

TER. A sorrowed look doth come into my breast, as the shun'd lamb into a shepherd fold o'er which in pity I do bleat—

GETA. Good, Lord ; she hath a look like as an homeless one.

TER. Pity the parent of abducted child ! his heart drawn ligaments do bind a kingdom's woes. A hand, a tress, a passing dimpled cheek, a little grave wet with love's tears and flower strown, all like a dagger plunge into the wound, how e'er so closeiy time hath stitched it up.

GETA. My Lord, she hath a look like the sweet lady Thesba, saint above.

TER. Thou'rt in thy dotage and thine eye bedimmed. Go, thou ; e'en though she hath an eye lash of my love, I'll bleed— die—for a gaze on't.

GETA. Good, Lord ; thou'l have her here ?

TER. Thou said'st she minded thee of Thesba. If there be semblance e'en so slight, thy dear perception shall be revenued.

GETA. Thou'l give her audience ?

TER. I will she comes. (*Exit GETA*) Thesba ! the spectral name doth send a palsy creeping through my veins, till sluggish clots run in the purplish tide. Thus death and age do play at hide and seek, death gets the game.

*Enter GETA.*

GETA. Good, Lord ; the maid attends.

TER. Bid her come in. (*Enter GIA. in long close mantle*) Here sit thee by and rest thy weariness. I would a generons legacy of time since thou hast chosen it in lieu of coin.

GIA. Most noble Signor, I have borne a gift—it is from one gone dead.

TER. A gift ? Nay, hang it on thy neck : I've need not for the bauble, thou must own.

GIA. Kind signor, it doth bear a lady's face—saintly as Agnese.

TER. The more it mateth thee, if that thy countenance be parcel with thy grace. Keep yet the toy, and wag on with that voice that hath most touching symphony. An old man's utterance is slow and hath a tremble in it. Was the dead named that thou could'st tell it me ?

GIA. Good sir, I know not if I understand.

TER. I say—the gift—I mean—(*coughs*) a cough most troublesome to me. Who is't I say ? What one is dead ?

GIA. The dead are many that I might not name.

TER. Who that is dead did send this trinket here ?

GIA. She that did send the gift said me to name her, not, the locket hung once on a baby's neck.

TER. Give't here ! 'Tis Thesba's face ! (*falls back.*)

GIA. Thou'rt paling man, (*throws off mantle*) thou need'st of air, (*opens sash*) poor Signor ! (*presses his haed*) sweet kind gentleman !

TER. Thou art the child—thou'rt Thesba's babe ! (*draws GIA to him*) Thesba, it is thy child— the mark is here —these are thy treeses—aye, thy countenance—thy shape ! Heaven, take the joy—it fits nor earth, nor me ! (*weeps*)

GIA. Poor one, thy mind is out. I would not it come back so I might tenant its sweet occupancy. No one did wet me with such woe, so shall it be entombed through my lips entrance (*kisses off tears*) I feel no shrinking in this clasp, nor yet such joy as I have in another's known. I feel the place were mine, all mine—I do forget—kind Signor, let me off, I grow too fond, if thou dost press me so. I am a beggar, Sire, a wretched, homeless one.

TER. Thou'rt child in woman's shape. Thou'rt Thesba and her babe grown one, the more to bless—

GIA. (*drawing away*) What meanst thou in this Thesba that thou nam'st? I am of kin to Nan.

TER. Child, name her not; 'twere she that snatched thee from the bank—Thesba did give thee birth—she that an angel is. Thy sire is here, Heaven clasps the earth, in that thou'rt bound of both.

GIA. Song of my childhood, spirit of holiness, my mother! My father! (*falls in his arms*).

*Enter GETA.*

GETA. Good mercy me! What vile adventurer is this? Master Termenes.

TER. (*looking up, still holding GIA*) What would you?

GET. There waits a Roman in the vestibule.

TER. Shut out the world and all its occupants, this happy hour is mine.

GETA. He comes to seek the Gypsy, and his name—

GIA. (*springing up*) Is what?

GETA. Mazzo.

GIA. It is a gentleman who has been kind to me. Wouldst thou the maid retire whilst I speak?

TER. Go wait, till thou art summoned by the bell. [Exit GETA]

GIA. It is my lover, he that did woo me in my rags, loves me better than greatness, better than wealth, better than all the world, in that he hath forsaken them for me. Good man, my father, as thou lov'dst Thesba, is Gianina loved.

TER. My child, I would have audience e'er thou see'st thy love; trust him to me. Go thou into thy chamber, 'twas prepared for thee by thine mother's hands; she did conceive thou wouldst return a woman grown, and when she, dying, whispered a farewell, she bade me keep it waiting till thou'rt come. The maid will show you to the room, there you will find a wardrobe from the costliest fabrics, jewels of rarest quality and hue. Go shed thy rags as thou hast thy condition, make thyself fair as the sweet soul that nestles in thy flesh. (*rings*)

GIA. My mother's hands, her loving hands, toiling for me. Oh, precious tokens of a mother's love, I'll kiss them for a lifetime, till that each thread shall bear the impress of my thankfulness.

*Enter GETA.*

TER. Take thou this lady to the gilded room; assist her as thou did'st the Lady Thesba.

GETA. What, hast thou gotten married, man?

TER. Go to thy task, thou shalt be duly made acquaint with all. Bid Josef to conduct the stranger here. [Exeunt GIA. and GETA]

TER. The grave hath opened and the dead come fourth ; thrice blessed joy whose blossoms spring from out the ashes of decayed hopes. My child come back to me, restored by the same power whose shadow hath shut out life's sunshine for a score of years, and whose fell hand hath traced line after line of suffering on this brow. It is forgiven, in that I hope for pardon from my sins. My child returned—but, ah ! there's stolen that which cannot be restored—she loves—'tis given out—and he the claimant waits within my halls. My daughter's suitor ; he knows not 'tis my daughter, so shall I prove him worthy or pronounce him false.

*Enter MAZZO and JOSEF, who retires.*

TER. Infirmity doth make me slow to rise ; sit thou near by.

MAZ. 'Tis a most hospitable heart that bids me here, since that my errand brings me not in company of greatness.

TER. I understand thou'rt on a Gypsy hunt. So fine a gentleman should run a wealthier track ; thou'rt sure no friend of such a beggar !

MAZ. I came to see the maid of whom thou speak'st disdainingly.

TER. 'Tis likely thou hast hunted her to test the oracles of fate with reference to some speculation thou'st on hand.

MAZ. Good sire, thy bounteous revenue hath made of thee a stranger to the poor—many an angel trails a tattered gown and bows ignoble in the plebian dust. The Gypsy hath a soul above her state.

TER. Thou'rt half in love with her I trow; she hath won on thee with her pretty face, thou'l over it another change of moon.

MAZ. I love the Gypsy, love her as my life, and though the moon and sun change places, it will not shift the orbit of my choice.

TER. Young sire, thy state is not like the many who, while they lead a princess into court and smile obedience to her glittering wand, have yet to own the power of a touch, a tender word, a sigh, from her the simple maiden who hath gotten the heart.

MAZ. I find not pleasure in this interview since that thou understand'st me not. Wilt thou I longer wait ere I do see the maid ?

TER. Stay thou till that my daughter shall have come. Though I do say it she's the fairest maid since that old Troy was sacked in woman's cause.

MAZ. The pictures we behold are what the lens of our perception makes them. Greater or less a thing of beauty as the heart's love doth magnify and color them.

TER. Would I might show thee as thyself art seen, so would'st thou be persuaded from thy course and seek thy mate from gayer plumaged bird. What say you to the pheasant of Termenes ? I'm free to own thou suit'st me for an heir.

MAZ. Would'st thou so like me if I were false ?

TER. Thine heart is large enough for this my daughter and the Gypsy too.

MAZ. What ! Would'st thou give thy seed unto a bigamist ?

TER. My daughter loves thee with the self same passion as thy dusky maid.

Maz. Thou speak'st in parables profound and 'plexing. How can she love one whom she never saw ?

Ter. Thou'st seen her and I wot, thou hast caressed and fondled her.

Maz. Thou dost not know me, or thou'st been deceived by thine informant. I never knew the daughter of Termenes, nor can I be persuaded there exists a heart with love such as Gianina's.

TER. Hear then; the Gypsy thou think'st thine—did lay within these arms, hugging my breast, scarcely an hour ago.

MAZ. 'Tis monstrous perfidy! Thyself art curst if that thy words have shadow of a truth. That she my love, scarcely consenting to her lover's clasp, should lie a ready fondling on another's breast! 'Tis false, false as thyself! The charge is infamous—(*turns to go*)

*Enter GIANINA, veiled.*

TER. Wait thou; Termenes' daughter doth attend with knowledge of the Gypsy's where'abouts. [Exit TER

MAZ. Most honored lady, I do wish thee well, though we be strangers.

GIA. Strangers? Thou dost not then remember to have met me. I saw thee in the streets of Rome, and since that hour have loved thee with a passion whose devouring flame hath eaten of my soul, turned night-time into day, thrust back the clouds till that in heaven's brightness I grow blind, and grope the veriest beggar for thy hand.

MAZ. Kind lady, thou speak'st strangely to a man thou'st met but but once; but ere thou hop'st, know thou that I am plighted, all my sense and soul, to a fair Gypsy maid—she that did come with message to Termenes; 'tis her I seek.

GIA. The mendicant hath gone, thou'l never see her as thou hast been wont.

MAZ. Gone? Gone?

GIA. Spare my poor ears; thou sing'st of gone in tones that deafen me. Here, take my hand;—thou mayest kiss it if thou find'st the Gyp within these walls.

MAZ. (*takes hand*) The hand, (*aside*) Gianina's own—is wondrous fair; (*aside*) it is my love! So I do have it, I'll forego the search. (*kisses hand*).

GIA. Thou'rt rude; but yet a little rudeness kindly meant were better than a tame conspiracy. I would thou lov'dst me as thou lov'st the maid.

MAZ. (*putting arm around*) That I do love thee heaven witness it!

GIA. (*drawing away*) Hast thou forgotten then thy gypsy love?

MAZ. I have no love save she that blesses me in this same hour.

GIA. Art thou not plighted to another's heart? Thyself hath said it.

MAZ. So doth thy being revel in my sense, I know not, care not, what I may have said; so that thou press me and art ever near—wilt thou be mine—for ever mine?

GIA. (*aside*) He loves me not! He loves me not! Tell me, in heaven's name—Kind gentleman, should I consent would not some fairer grace win thee away? Untrue to one meaneth untrue to all.

MAZ. Angels, bear witness, in this my heart thou reign'st omnipotent. A goddess at whose shrine all that within me is bows and doth worship.

GIA. (*aside*) Oh, God! That I should live for this! Thou knowest not what is underneath this veil.

MAZ. Bind thou mine eyes, and I will venture for a guess. (GIA. binds eyes) It is the fairest maid in all of Venice, one who in proving

other's love, hath shown her own fond heart. My bird, my own dear love, it is—Gianina! (MAZZO takes off band. GIANINA unveils)

GIA. How could'st thou know her in this altered state?

MAZ. As knows the jay the twitter of its mate. What means this change; art thou adopted of Termenes?

GIA. I am the daughter of Termenes, by the ties of blood. Nanna did steal me from my mother's arms—she that is now a saint—bore me away into the Gypsy's camp, since when, until I brought the message yester night, I have been mourned as dead. Oh, Mazzo, it is like I dreamt.

*Enter TERMENES.*

GIA. (going to TER.) My father mine, (kisses hand) this is the lover whom thou heard'st me say, my most true Mazzo.

TER. Welcome, good welcome to my grateful heart. How swells thy love, is it not large enough for this my daughter and the gypsy too?

MAZ. Most reverend sire, I am an humble artisan of Rome and came not as a guest, thou know'st.

TER. Thou hast a heart as him of Nazareth, to lift the face cloth from a thing while all around do say “it stinketh.” Into the charnel of the grave bound soul thou'st poured the sunshine of divinest trust, till the blanched hope, flushed with incoming life, mounts like an eaglet to its kindred crag, with downward gaze on the incongruous world.

MAZ. So high 't has perched I may not bring it down. Mine was a lowly maid; she scarce consenting, what have I to hope in this a princess' love?

GIA. I gave the jewel to my love so kind,

Take now the casket, it is “silken lined.”

TER. Thus in consenting thou art grown to one, wedded is all save that which man accounts;—so all impatient wait I for my love as thou hast waited thine, so doth anticipation lend me wings, that I do hurry death, whose nuptial rite will bind to an eternity of joy. The sands run low, I would they lasted till the priest hath blessed thy unity. Bid in thy friends, I will a banquet for thy marriage day, so shall new branches trim the gnarled trunk, ere yet the top be fall'n to the ground.

GIA. Dear father, shall I sob or sigh? Smile or bow down in grief?

TER. Thou sob'st to have me die. Go thou with thy dear one in some sweet place, and leaning on his breast learn there what were the sentiments, or smiles, or tears. Go while I rest; if thou return'st clear eyed, —thou'st drunk the nectar'd drop, if they be swollen, thou hast mistaken where thine heart is set. (lies on sofa)

GIA. (covering with mantle) Good father, rest. Mazzo, wilt come? I have a volume of best news to tell. [Exeunt GIA. and MAZ.

*Enter NAN. clad as ghost.*

NAN. Ha! This is the palace of Termenes, gilded and trapped out with his cursed gold. Nothing astir in all the premises—I knocked three times upon the gate, the guard did open and at sight of me fell down as dead. Armed to the teeth with dagger points and clubs struck dumb and senseless at a spectral rag! Ha! What's this? A sleeper sleeps. Come now, old Sig., what dreamest thou? Old man, wake thee not o'

this, else thou do see thy grandame's ghost, Who's this that has Termenes' countenance? Termenes' beard's sloe black, he had not any crows feet on his flesh—Tis he! Tis he! Yea, twenty winters hath him bleached to this, and from these talons hath grown out the claws that clutch about his face. Look thou Nanopatra, and laugh at this thy handiwork. Termenes! Termenes! This heart of stone did run as wax to thee—this shriveled hide blushed damask in thy hand. What if I hocked a frog bone on thee to compel thy love, 'twas as an angler would hook in a fish, to glut starvation. I pulled thee in, but flopping thou slid'st back to bite a fairer bait. The hunger ceases not; 't has gnawed me, gnawed me to the bone. At sight of thee, the mouth holes in my skin do run with drool, till in its slimy stream, death's captain waits to pilot me across. A cat-ish yearning struggles in my sense to suck thy breath, so thou may'st habit this vile tenement with me. A thousand fangs scarlet with feverish thirst, do pierce like needles all my famished life, begging thy red blood for a drink! Termenes! (TER. *starts*)

TER. (calls) Thesba! Thesba! (sees ghost; swoons.)

NAN. Thesba not me! the name hath summoned up the hosts of Tartarus! Typhoeus hath risen from the tomb of Ætna—he leaps upon thee! A hundred dragon heads do spit their vengeance on thy name! His fire spurting nostrils, licking up thy blood, shall blast thy soul! Termenes, die! I hate thee! Thine heart of flint hath sent a spark into this tindered hulk! I burn as Hell! Die! (stands with dagger over TER.)

Enter GIANINA.

GIA. What's this that mocks the slumber of my sire! 'Tis Nanna's ghost, come here to haunt Termenes! Her fingers hang upon the air above his rest sketching some horrid dream! (goes to ghost, falls back) Nanna, go back; go back and stay a little while. Come not to cast a cloud over the crimson dawn of this my wedding day. Go stay in purgatory till to-morrow's night, I'll sell the diamond crown Termenes gave to buy thee out. Go, Nanna, for Gianina, go. (NAN. falls back with extended arms as if in blessing. Exit NAN. GIA. bends over couch. Scene closes in.)

SCENE II. TERMENES on couch. JOSEF and GETA attendant.

GETA. The master sleeps o'er long; jog on his arm, his soul hath got not any service yet.

JOSEF. His prayers are said, and the good priest hath broke the body of the Lord to him; let him sleep on.

GETA. Mind'st thou how the good lady Thesba, naming her beads, did pause with her dead fingers on the Virgin Mary's name? Saints above! (JOSEF shakes head, is silent)

GETA. Josef, get out o' this. Thou'st got thee on a holy melancholy since thou did'st spy the ghost. It meant not me, nor thee; 'twas Thesba in her angle robe flown down to warn thee of the master's death.

JOSEF. 'Twer never she, my lady, nor a spirit fitting the condition of Termenes; a devilish hag with snakish eyes, and tongue that wagged and hissed at me.

GETA. Hissing were as it said, nor she-e nor the-e.

JOSEF. When run you in the company of ghosts to get ghost Latin so to heart?

GETA. The master rouses; 'tend you his wants.

JOSEF. He rolls his eyes and hath a deathly look.

GETA. What! Think you he dies before the weddigers be come?

JOSEF. A likely wedding's day be this, right in the eyes o' death. Poor Lady sweet! Good heart, clean broke over her missin' younglin' now come back and getting married to a man by the same Priest that done her christ'ning. Mercy me!

GETA. "Married to a man," Josef. You talk as though 'twere an uncommon case. We two have known the whole on't. Well nigh a score of years we've run to bless the wants of yon old man. Poor soul, the bulk is drifting fast upon the rocks. Saints attend!

TER. (*faintly*) Josef—how long—before—they come? I've had a vision—she my love—waits—waits—give me to—wet—my lips—

JOSEF. Here is the water, master.

TER. Think you—they come?

GETA. I will look out and see if I do get a sight at them (*opens sash*) aye, aye; far up the great canal, just heaving from yon bridge, I see the fleet of Gondola. See you yon banner, Josef, it bears the lion of St. Marks, so must a priest be coming with the twain.

TER. Hark, I do hear a joyful wedding strain!—hear'st—thou—Josef—

JOSEF. Good master, I do mark it well.

GETA. Master, compose yourself; they be already come.

JOSEF. Take thou these drops, they will of strength.

GETA. Heard'st thou the pageant on the portico? (*sound of music*)

TER. Raise me—a little up—light up the candles—the room is—dark—so—dark—

*Enter Priest, GIANINA and MAZZO, GOLINE and NORVO, CLAUDIA and HERMETUS, VILLETTA and CAPO, BROWNELL with bags.*

PRIEST. (*advancing to couch*) By all the holy powers on me conferred, most noble Termenes, I do present these unto thee as one. (*Gia. and Maz. kneel by couch*)

TER. My—bless—ing—rest—upon thy—head—daughter—and—son—of Thesba and—Termenes. Keep thou—this palace—ours is up—above—the mansion—of—the—blest. [*Dies*

PRIEST. 'Tis over (*priest prayiug, all bow.*)

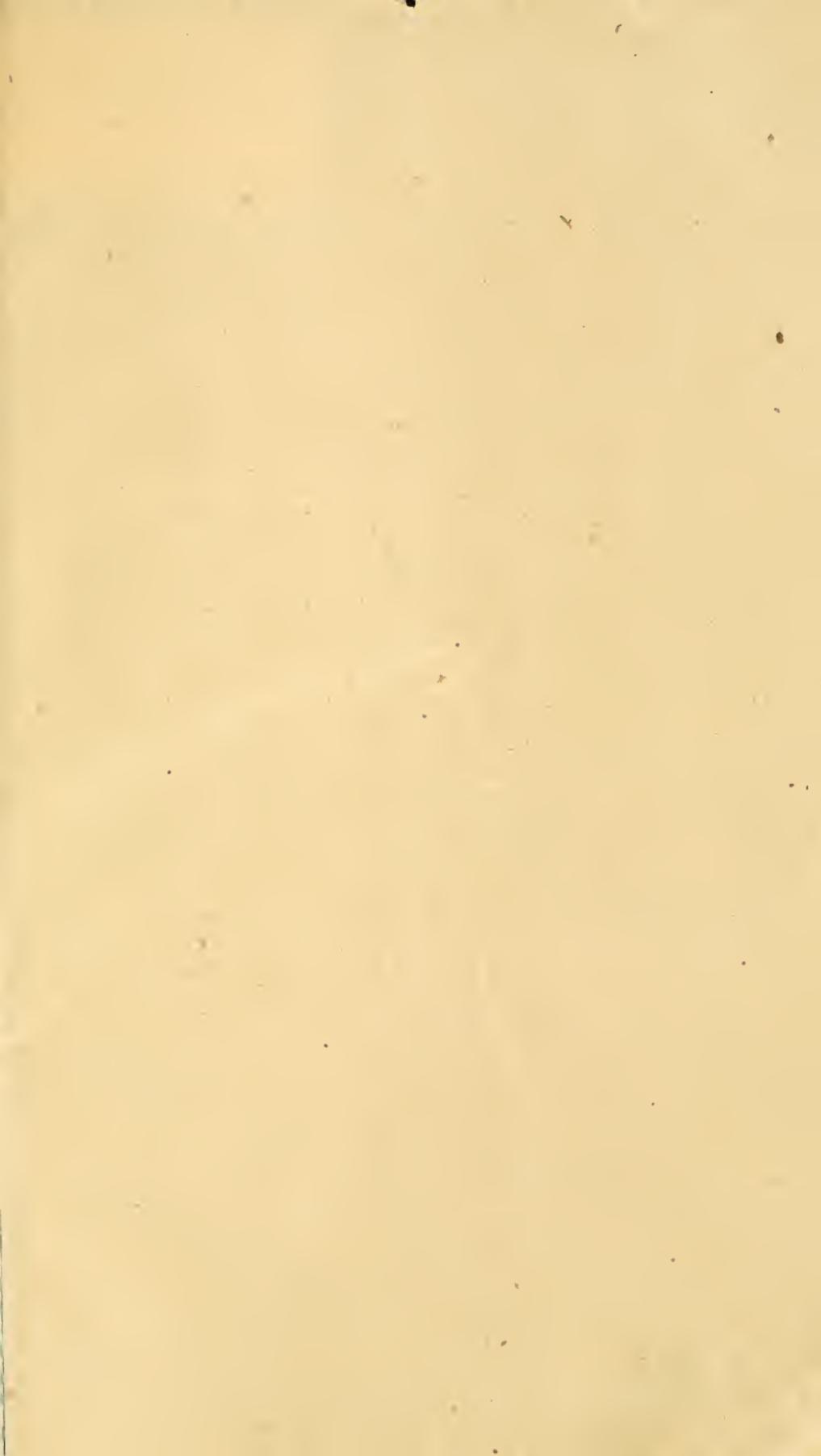
*Enter NAN. covered in white; stealthily approaches; BROWNELL seeing, hides bags.*

JOSEF. Master Termenes—dead—

NAN. Dead! (*all start*) Dead! Termenes—gone—(*throws off sheet, straightens to full height*) Death cheats Nanopatra's revenge! Earth gives not settlement! We'll meet before the bar of Justice! (*stabs herself*)

CURTAIN.





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